

Popular Errors About Classical Studies



Every Catholic Child in a Catholic School!

The Catholic Mind

SEMI-MONTHLY

Price 5 cents; \$1.00 per year

Entered as second-class matter, October 22, 1914, at the Post Office at
New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879.

Vol. XV, No. 16. August 22, 1917

THE AMERICA PRESS
59 East 83d Street
NEW YORK

The Catholic Mind

Catholicism and Americanism
Freemasonry and Catholicism in America
South America's Catholicism
The Catholic Sense
Pseudo-Scientists vs. Catholics
Catholics and Frank Statement
Catholic Church and Billy Sunday
The "Unbiased" "Independent"
Religious Bigotry in Action
A Catholic Soldier's Diary

Justice to Mexico
Mexican Liberalism
Mexico's Social Problem
Mexico's National Church
The Persecutors' Constitution

Capital Punishment
Race Suicide
Divorce
The Mixed-Marriage Problem

The Catholic School System
The Religious Teacher
How Catholic Colleges Exist
Catholic Schools for Catholic Youth
The Contemporary Drama
Reading and Character
What the Church Has Done for Education

Catholic Missions
Protests of Pius X and the Bishops of Portugal

How to Reach the Medieval Mind
The Jesuit Myth
The People's Pope (Pius X)

Popular Errors About Classical Studies

THOMAS E. MURPHY, S.J.

*A Lecture Delivered at Holy Cross College, Worcester,
Mass., March 3, 1903.*

IF any apology or explanation be deemed necessary for my selection of "Classical Studies" as the subject of a popular lecture, I would say that I feel confident that, when the last word is spoken, you will all be convinced that this is a question which concerns the people very closely. I shall endeavor also to treat it in a popular rather than in an academic fashion.

My main reason for considering this question of interest and even of vital importance to the public is that there seems to be danger today of the passing of the "small college," as it is called, and of the decadence of classical studies, and this, I hope to show, would be a great social calamity.

During the past twenty-five years, and especially during the past decade, the very existence of the classical college has been threatened and deliberate steps have been taken to crowd it out of existence. This is evidenced by the upward growth of the high schools and the downward reaching of the large universities, culminating in the recent proposal, by one of these universities, of a college course of only two years; and, strange to say, the advocate of this amputation, as I would call it, assures us that the operation is absolutely necessary to save

the life of the small college. Well, although we have heard before of amputation as a life-saver, yet when there is question of cutting off not only the feet but also the head, we may be pardoned for doubting the expediency of the operation. In fact, Dean Briggs of Harvard would lead us to regard the operation as cutting out the heart. In his last report he concludes with the words: "I write as one who holds that the college is the very heart of the university and that 'out of the heart are the issues of life,' and I write the more earnestly because I see some American universities pushing blindly out from under them the college props on which they stand." Now, we are told that the business managers of large universities are only adapting their supply, so to speak, to the popular demand. If this be the case, I take it to be quite within the province of the popular lecturer to correct popular errors and cultivate popular taste in this matter.

And now, as to the decadence of classical studies: there is no doubt that classical studies have become unpopular: but one of the reasons is that the people have heard only one side of this question. They have listened to the advocates of new methods, of yearly specializing, of electivism, of so-called practical courses and laboratory methods, of short cuts and attractive studies. They have heard from the so-called self-made man, to whom Senator Hoar recently paid his respects when, in his speech at the opening of Clark College, he said: "Commonly, these persons would find it hard to get anybody else who would be willing to stamp his name on the product as the maker." Be that as it may, the people have heard how large fortunes have been made by such men without even a taste of classical studies, and they have come to regard the latter as an obstacle rather than a help

to what they desire above all things—material success, attained in the shortest possible time.

In consequence of all this one-sided information, it is astonishing how many people disparage thoughtlessly the value of classical training and point out the few examples of men who succeeded without it, as though that proved that no such training were necessary or desirable. Managers of classical colleges, consequently, often experience that depressing sensation which comes over the physician whose patient wants to be cured in a hurry and tells him of all the remedies she has read about in the papers, "warranted to give immediate relief, or money refunded."

But there is something in the educational atmosphere of late that indicates unmistakably that the people are growing as skeptical about modern short-cuts to intellectual heights as they are about patent medicines. And Chancellor Day, of Syracuse University, encourages the hope that some at least of the large universities are making a stand against what he describes as educational quackery. Only a few weeks ago he said at an alumni banquet in New York: "If we can accomplish nothing but an effectual block against the present craze of educational hurry and the fads that are offered by educational quacks, as easy and popular substitutes for the rugged old brain-making processes vindicated by the world's mightiest thinking, we shall give ample reason for our existence." And President James of Northwestern University makes me feel that it is not yet too late to talk to the people about this matter. "The general public," he says, "is far more interested now in everything relating to our colleges and universities, our newspapers give more space to chronicling the events in the academic world, and take a livelier interest in the discussion of

college and university policy than ever before." I am not alone, therefore, in considering this question of interest to the public.

Another precaution that I must take in entering upon this question is this. I feel that I must encounter and overcome the prejudice of those who may suspect me of special pleading and classical bias. No opinions of mine can correct popular errors on this question if they are labeled bias. To meet this difficulty, I have summoned a number of witnesses against whom you cannot be thus prejudiced—none of them Jesuits. Against none of them, therefore, can you raise the cry, as you might against my pleading, *Cicero pro domo sua*, a plea for the Jesuit system and for the traditions of Holy Cross! It will not be my fault, you must admit, if, incidentally, the testimony of my witnesses elicit an endorsement of the Jesuit system and show the wisdom of those who have, in the past, guided the destinies of Holy Cross; who have not followed those educational movements which have led to the present chaotic condition of education in this country; and whose successors enjoy today the gratification of seeing some of the wisest and best among modern educators advocating a return to the very curriculum and the very methods which have been retained by Holy Cross and by all the advocates of classical studies.

I realize, too, that in taking up the question of classical studies I am confronted by the thesis that the classical curriculum is already dead; and it devolves on me, as a distinguished professor of Brown University put it under similar circumstances, to plead for the setting aside of the coroner's verdict and to establish the fact and the right of survival.

Only a few years ago, at a meeting of the Association of Colleges and Preparatory Schools of the Middle States and Maryland, the resolution: "Resolved, that the small college, between the high school and the university, should be maintained," came up for discussion; and the friends of the classical college were told by the very man who is today advocating a two-years' college course, presumably for the salvation of the small college, that there could be no question of maintaining the old "medieval" classical college; that institution, he said had not kept up with the procession and was dead and buried long ago. Well—he soon found some very lively corpses in that assembly, who voted to set aside that coroner's verdict. Since that day, moreover, the educational magazines of the country have presented an interesting array of prominent educators, who not only advocate the retention of the old classical curriculum, as the survival of the fittest, but show also that the worst educational blunders of the past century have been along the lines of departure from the despised, "old-fashioned" methods. I shall call some of these witnesses to speak for me this evening.

I should like to premise, also, that I have preferred to answer objections to classical studies rather than give a direct statement of the advantages of classical training, for several reasons. First of all, because the direct statement of advantages might assume the form of an academic essay, rather than meet the demands of a popular lecture. Again, I am directing my remarks not only to the people in general but to prospective candidates in particular, and I quite agree with those who hold that most students, at the age when they should begin the study of the classics, are too immature to realize what the study does for them, and are naturally prone to shirk any

study that demands real work. The best way of showing this class the advantages of any studies is to make the work show them; much in the same way as the physical instructor would say to one who might attempt to discuss the advantages of any of his prescribed exercises: "Go ahead and do it; then you'll see the use of it." In the "Letters of a Self-Made Merchant to His Son," I read recently: "Some men learn the value of truth by having to do business with liars and some by going to Sunday-school. Some men learn the cussedness of whiskey by having a drunken father and some by having a good mother." Similarly, I might say, some learn the advantages of classical studies by coming face to face with experience of the lack of them, when too late; others by submitting to the guidance of a wise Alma Mater and not asking the why and the wherefore.

But I must address chiefly the larger public who have heard so much against these studies. This class, I feel, I can better satisfy by answering the charges which they have heard.

The first charge that I shall consider might be formulated thus: "The classics are all right for those who have an aptitude for them, but my boy's aptitude is for the natural sciences. I want him to make a specialty of these, and he cannot begin too soon. So I do not want you to force him to take what he doesn't like or to waste his time on dead languages." This objection is just bristling with popular errors. I shall endeavor to pluck the bristles one by one.

There is a distinguished high-school principal whom I heard telling, about two years ago, the answer he once gave to a mother who stated this objection to him, emphasizing particularly her son's aptitude. "My dear

madam," he said, "I have studied your boy for some time, and the only aptitude I have been able to discover in him is an aptitude for shirking work." This epitomizes the experience of most educators with most of those who raise the "aptitude" objection to the classics. Sir Andrew Noble corrects the same error thus: "You can form but little idea of the number of persons . . . who have assured me that their sons had no taste for books, but had shown a marvelous talent for engineering. The marvelous talent generally turns out to be an incapacity for seriously applying the mind."

But, supposing the case of genuine aptitude for a special study, for such cases do exist, what is to be said of devotion to such specialties during the high-school or early college period? The testimony of ex-President Low of Columbia on this point is very interesting. In a paper written quite recently for the *Youth's Companion* he says: "Specialization may make a man bright and keen; its tendency inevitably is to make a man also narrow." And he cites the case of Darwin, who wrote of himself—something which may explain, by the way, the narrowness of some of his views—that as a result of his specializing he found, in the later years of his life, that he had lost altogether the capacity for the enjoyment of Shakespeare. Then Mr. Low continues, "If this be the result of specializing in such a man it seems to make clear the importance of broadening the man at the beginning, as widely as possible, before the specializing be begun by him."

President Wilson of Princeton, in his inaugural address, calls attention to the same objection to early specializing and shows how the early broadening is to be effected. "What is to be said," he asks, "of the preliminary

training of the specialist, of the general foundation of knowledge, of the equipment of the mind which all men must have to serve this busy, this sophisticated generation?" And he makes clear the kind of preparation that he considers necessary. He maintains that for the purely collegiate training (as distinct, that is, from special and professional training) no subjects of study can ever take the place of the humanities, as these were understood and taught in days gone by. The classics, mathematics, the linguistic studies of the old curriculum have found no equivalent in the early disciplining of a youthful mind, which from them takes fiber, strength and certainty of touch. And he concludes his remarks on this theme by pledging Princeton University to a restoration and retention of the traditional *studium generale*. I might remind you here that Mr. Woodrow Wilson is as distinguished as a historian and litterateur as he promises to be in the position of President of Princeton University. One might rather expect from him, therefore, a plea in favor of specializing in English and history.

I cannot pass over, in this connection, the testimony of Professor Charles E. Norton, because it is so absolutely devoid of anything like classical bias, in that it shows that specializing even in Latin and Greek, before the general benefit of a classical college course is secured, is not desirable. Writing to the father of a young man who was studying in Europe, he says: "Tell the young man to make his chief aim a broad culture of himself as a man. Since you say he proposes to study Latin, let him perfect himself in Latin, but warn him against the danger of becoming a specialist, who may be a fine Latin scholar but not a thoroughly cultivated man."

I might add also the testimony of Sir Andrew Noble,

taken from an address delivered in October, 1899, before the faculty, students and patrons of a purely technical college. "One of the greatest abuses," he said, "I take to be that technical education is often begun too early in life; that is, that it is substituted for a general education, and a boy attempts to put his knowledge to practical use before he has learned how to learn. . . . My own impression is that, as a sharpener of young intellect, it would be difficult to improve the curriculum which, in the main, has been in force for so many centuries."

One of the speakers at the convocation of the Regents of the University of the State of New York, held in Albany, a year ago last summer, hit off very epigrammatically his preference of classical training to early specializing in the natural sciences, when he said: "I should much prefer to have my boy know how to scan a page of Homer than how to skin a cat." There is much food for thought in these few words.

What then is the precise error of those who advocate specializing during the secondary or early college period? They are trying to build a special kind of educational structure before laying a foundation for any educational structure. The result would be such a work of art as the topsy-turvy house, turrets and chimneys downward, shown at the Paris Exposition; or like the fabulous castle in the air or the Scriptural house built upon the sands. In whatever way you conceive it, it would lack security, solidity, stability.

Coming now to that part of this charge which implies that a student should not be forced to take studies that are disagreeable, distasteful, difficult, I recall the Conference on Classical Studies at the Convention of the National Educational Association, held at Minneapolis, last

July. Professor Schuyler of the St. Louis High School met the objection in this way: "One of the greatest benefits of the Greek course (a word about Latin later) comes from the very fact that it is not what is known as a 'snap' course; but," he added, "the results more than pay for the exertion, not only in the esthetic line but in the strength of character produced." And every student, who has surmounted the first difficulties in the study of Greek, appreciates the force of the words, "the strength of character produced." Other high-school principals and professors confirmed this view at the same conference and strengthened it by statistics drawn from their own experience with pupils in classical and non-classical schools.

As to Latin, Professor Cutler, at the same conference, quoted the saying of the famous Dr. Arnold, in answer to one who asked him what benefit the study of Latin would be to a boy, when he did not like it and would never use it. "The question, sir," he answered, "is not what your boy will do with Latin, but what Latin will do for your boy." That is the point which our critics persist in overlooking.

And Professor Münsterberg, of Harvard, seems to recall with pleasure the hard and disagreeable work in his early classical training, and he assures us that he would not have it exchanged for the easier methods advocated by our critics. "The one great thing, he says, "for which I have to thank my school, my parents and my teachers, is that, instead of being allowed to follow my caprices, along the paths of least resistance, I was bound to go the prescribed way, which was full of resistance, and full of matter which seemed to me useless at the time. That which I learned at school is mostly forgotten today [this meets another objection] and yet I would not exchange it for any utilitarian preparation."

The testimony of Professor William C. Collar, Master of the Roxbury Latin School, in his remarks last month at the Luncheon of the Twentieth Century Club in Boston, brings us right up to date on this point. "I agree," he said, "that we ought to introduce more of joy into the processes of education." "But," he asks very pertinently, "Isn't there too much self-indulgence with every boy doing what he wants to, studying what he chooses? Isn't there danger that we shall have too many self-indulgent boys, looking to their own pleasure, instead of to a life of usefulness?" I hope you are not failing to observe that these are all impartial witnesses.

Now, what shall I say to that part of the objection which speaks so contemptuously of Latin and Greek as dead languages? Has the coroner already rendered his verdict? And if so, shall it be set aside? As to Latin, the last report of the United States Commission of Education shows that this study is growing more popular every year, in colleges and high schools, especially in the East; and, as to Greek, the same report shows that, although the percentage of students taking Greek in secondary schools is a little less than it was a decade ago, yet, during the last decade, the number of students taking Greek in college has almost doubled, and in percentage of increase it ranks with the first studies.

Possibly some objector may here cry: "Paradox! A while ago you seemed to fear the decline of Greek, and now you say it is growing popular." Precisely. A while ago, too, I said that people were growing skeptical about educational short-cuts and interested in classical studies. This report indicates precisely the revival to which I referred. That is one sign of life in the supposed corpse. But the fact still remains that the proportion of students

taking Greek to those not taking it is smaller than it should be. Greek is like a grand old tree, under whose shade has grown up an immense tangle of shrubs of all varieties, more or less attractive, with perhaps an ephemeral growth of mushrooms. This undergrowth attracts the notice of all who pass by the way, but the life and vigor and grandeur of the old tree are appreciated only by those who turn their gaze higher and take in a broader horizon. Numerically, these latter observers may be to the former only as units to thousands.

The first witness whom I would summon to this coroner's inquest is one who certainly cannot be accused of special pleading in this matter and who has hardly had his peer among the moderns as a man of letters and a man of affairs, James Russell Lowell. Listen to what he had to say about dead languages in a speech delivered at Harvard: "If the classical languages are dead, they yet speak to us, and with a clearer voice than any living tongue. If the Greek language is dead, yet the literature it enshrines is crammed with life as perhaps no other writing, except Shakespeare's, ever was or will be."

Chancellor Andrews of Nebraska maintains that we could not afford to allow Greek to die, if there were any danger of its doing so, because it is a social necessity. "No modern community," he says, "can, as a community, dispense with Greek, unless it elects to be barbaric." That is dying hard, to say the least.

Dr. Manatt of Brown University waxes very indignant against those who speak of Greek as a dead language. Speaking from his own experience with Greek and in Greece, he says: "One who has lived among the most wide-awake people on the planet, a people who light their cigars as well as their streets by electricity, . . . who run

more daily newspapers in their little metropolis than New York and Boston combined can boast, who print and read more books in a year than any other community of equal numbers in the world; . . . well, one who has lived among these Greeks will hardly class them with extinct species." Speaking of their language, modern Greek, as compared with classic Greek, he continues, "From the 'Canterbury Tales' to the 'Merry Wives of Windsor' it was only two centuries; from the *Iliad* to this morning's *Acropolis* it must be twenty-eight. Yet Chaucer might have been more puzzled by Shakespeare's English than Homer by our newspaper Greek." Then he exclaims indignantly: "Talk of dead languages! In the whole family of human speech, there never was a more lively and prolific shoot than this dead Greek. How its grafts have enriched our own brave English! Take up your 'bread-and-butter'-ologies, and every blessed one of them bristles with Greek. Without Greek you cannot name a flower, nor classify a pebble nor analyze a drop of dew, to say nothing of telling the stars or sounding the deeps of divine philosophy. Every new thought of man finds in it the fitting word, and science takes no step forward that it does not stop to register in Greek. It is always inexpedient to call the coroner before you are sure of your corpse or to send for the undertaker when the subject is at the top of his condition."

I pass now to the second charge against classical studies. I shall put it in the form in which it is sometimes presented by parents. "I want my boy to get a thorough English education, with some modern languages, if you will, but these seem to be crowded out in your classical curriculum." You will observe that three counts are implied in this indictment: First, that a thorough English

education is incompatible with the study of the ancient classics; second, that modern languages might do the disciplinary work of Latin and Greek; third, that English and other modern languages are crowded out in the classical curriculum.

I cannot refrain from stating here, in answer to the first count, an experience of my own, in another college, in which two classes of students took the same English course in their sophomore year. One class was composed entirely of classical students, the other of those who were seeking a thorough English education without Latin or Greek. When the examination report for English was read, it appeared that the first among the "special English" students, who had no Latin or Greek to trouble them, stood below the last of the classical students, both classes having had the same teacher, the same examiners and the same written examination. I leave you to draw your own conclusions.

To help you in the process, permit me to introduce a professor of poetry from Oxford, one whose reputation on both sides of the Atlantic should add weight to what he may have to say about English, Professor Francis Palgrave: "The thorough study of English literature," he says, "is hopeless, unless based upon an equally thorough study of the literature of Greece and Rome. To know Shakespeare and Milton, is the pleasant and crowning consummation of knowing Homer and Æschylus, Catullus and Vergil. And upon no other terms can we obtain it." Is not this impartial testimony?

Meeting the second count in this indictment, that, namely, which proposes modern languages as a substitute for the ancient classics, I should like to quote the reply of Professor Byars of McKendree College, Ill., to one

who told him that he intended to learn the modern languages instead of Latin and Greek. "My dear sir, you are mistaken," he said, "you will not learn the modern languages thus, you will only smatter in them, and never know enough of them to suspect the extent of your ignorance. If you must smatter, smatter in Greek and Latin first and take your chances with the rest." And Dr. William T. Harris, United States Commissioner of Education, has said: "To suggest the study of German or French as a substitute for Latin or Greek would be parallel in the science of zoology by suggesting a study of snakes instead of tadpoles in the embryology of the frog."

"But why," you ask, "may not the modern languages be substituted for Latin or Greek?" This question came up at one of the meetings of the National Educational Association in Minneapolis last summer, and Professor Charles S. Hartwell, of the Boys' High School, Brooklyn, N. Y., explained why the substitution of modern languages would not be effective. "They do not produce," he said, "the results and discipline which are derived from the ancient classics. . . . It is more difficult to get real work out of pupils with modern languages, and it is the work that tells. Though an English teacher," he continues, "I wish to bear my testimony to the dependence of English upon the study of the Greek and Latin classics." Impartial testimony again!

To specify still more definitely the reasons why the study of modern languages cannot be made to do the work of classical study and to show incidentally some of the advantages of the latter, I would summon Professor William Baird of Virginia. Writing in the *Educational Review* for April, 1902, he says: "The careful study of the comparative structure of languages and the transfer-

ence of ideas from one to another, considered merely as a mental exercise, is of unsurpassed, perhaps of unequaled value. It calls forth and often strains to the utmost the high powers of analysis and combination. It fosters habits of patient and accurate thinking; it cultivates at the same time acuteness and breadth of comprehension; above all, it brings out in strong relief the difference between words and things, between the garb of the thought and the thought itself. And this last and most important function is far better subserved by the study of Greek and Latin than by that of any modern language." Speaking in the same article of his own experience in the study of languages, he goes on to say: "I was enraptured with Italian . . . and little less pleased with Spanish. But when I went back to the Greek I felt as if I had never known before what intellectual enjoyment was." I feel constrained to interject here that I am not quoting from a joke book but from a very serious article in the very serious *Educational Review*.

What these witnesses have testified concerning the inefficiency of modern languages as a substitute for the classics might be said with equal force of any other proposed substitute. In a memorial of the philosophical faculty of Berlin, Rector Hofman, himself a chemist, sums up the judgment of that faculty in these words: "All efforts to find a substitute for the classical languages, whether in mathematics, in the modern languages or in the natural sciences, have been thus far unsuccessful." And these are the German guides whom our modern American educators imagine they are imitating. "After long and vain search," he continues, "we must always come back finally to the result of centuries of experience; the surest instrument that can be used in the training of

youth is given us in the study of the languages, the literature and the works of art of classical antiquity."

As to that part of this charge which alleges that the classics crowd out English, modern languages and other important studies, Professor Clapp of California shows that quite the contrary has been his experience. "The classical graduate," he says very truly, "may be an expert political economist, while the social science graduate knows nothing of Homer. The classical graduate may have had forty or fifty hours of natural science, but the science graduate has never read a page of Plato. He will have to go to his dictionary for the meaning of the scientific terms which he uses every day, for most of them are pure Greek, and his classical friend can interpret them at a glance. The classical graduate can get more mathematics than the average professor of mathematics will ever use, but the graduate in engineering will never understand the classical allusions in English literature." The inference is evident; namely, that the classics do not crowd out other subjects but are pushed to the wall by them.

But we often hear that the classical curriculum is old-fashioned, behind the age, not up-to-date, medieval. It was good enough in its day, but is not suited to this busy, practical twentieth century. Well, suppose we call this the third charge against classical studies. I hardly consider it worthy of refutation, but we hear it repeated so often that it must be making an impression on the popular mind and perhaps ought to be answered in a lecture of this kind.

No one imagines, of course, that our objectors use the term "medieval" in its strict sense. They are well aware that the advocates of the classical curriculum are twen-

tieth-century educators, who have been more than "keeping up with the procession," along the lines of athletics, dramatics, debating, college comforts and college discipline, and have not been too conservative to adopt, wherever it could be done without sacrifice of principle, the best that modern methods had to offer.

But if by "old-fashioned" the critics mean that the advocates of classical studies are not allowing themselves to be tossed about by every wind of educational theory, by every gust that blows, so to speak, from Cambridge, Massachusetts, or Morningside Heights, New York, that they are not wandering blindly hither and thither through the chaotic maze into which experimentation has already led elementary and secondary education and is fast drawing higher education, then, I ween, these advocates of classical studies willingly plead guilty to the mild imputation. But men like Dean Briggs and Professor Münsterberg of Harvard, Professor Ladd of Yale, President Wilson of Princeton, Dr. Manatt of Brown, Chancellor Day of Syracuse, and a host of others, who have had experience with the "old-fashioned" and are living in the environment of what I suppose you would call the new-fashioned and up-to-date system, seem to have many old-fashioned doubts about the superiority of the new-fashioned studies and methods.

President Wilson of Princeton said not long ago, referring to our so-called progress in education: "We have received immense increase of knowledge . . . but have failed to preserve that harmonious system and thorough discipline which were the direct result of the methods of an earlier generation."

Dean Briggs, in his "Old-Fashioned Doubts About New-Fashioned Education," says: "I still doubt whether

we can do better for our children than, first (in the preparatory school) to drill them in a few subjects, mostly old ones; then to give them a modest general education in college or in all but the last year or two at college; then to let them specialize as energetically as they can, but not exclusively." I cannot refrain from noting here that if Dean Briggs had been engaged to formulate the Holy Cross platform he could not have done so more concisely and exactly than he has done in this brief statement. He goes still further in the same article which appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly* for October, 1900, and bewails the loss of the old-fashioned methods even when the old studies are still retained. "The undergraduate," he says, speaking of elective courses, "may choose the old studies but not the old instruction. Instruction, under the elective system, is aimed at the specialist."

That was what Dean Briggs said three years ago. To show you that he has not yet changed his mind, and to show at the same time how the new methods are working today at Harvard, let me quote from his last report, just published under date of January 31, 1903: "For a freshman, when first he faces the elective system, the danger of mistakes is grave. His home advisers seldom know the college; his college adviser seldom knows him. Moreover, his college adviser may well hesitate to discriminate among studies which the faculty declares to be of equal value; or he may believe it his duty to recruit his own specialty; or he may believe it his duty to keep clear of what anybody could construe as recruiting his own specialty; in the matter wherein a freshman first needs advice the adviser is neither qualified nor permitted to advise. The burden rests on the freshman himself; and though it is well for him to take responsibility, for this

particular responsibility he may be too immature and short-sighted."

And Dean Briggs is not the only dissenter in the Harvard citadel of modern educational methods. Professor Münsterberg, of the same university, says, with regard to the new methods: "Even in the college, two-thirds of the elections are haphazard . . . a helter-skelter chase of the unknown."

Passing from Harvard to Yale in pursuit of authentic information about the working of the new-fashioned methods, I learn from Professor Ladd, through his article in the *Forum* for April, 1902, that he too has some misgivings. "Somehow," he says, "with the so-called educator who aims at the reputation of being up-to-date, the opinion seems unquestioned that a modern liberal education is the same thing as an education conducted by the recurrent elections of those who are being educated. No greater mistake could easily be made than this." And, speaking of his own training in contrast with the modern, he says: "I can never be too grateful that I was educated under a system which had not then developed the infelicities and inefficiency of the present elective system."

But possibly those who despise "old-fashioned" methods and studies may also spurn the opinions of such witnesses as I have cited, and disqualify them as old fossils and old fogies. What then will they say to the testimony of Mr. John Corbin, the author of "An American at Oxford"? He concludes his description of a student who has passed through the new-fashioned American elective system thus: "He has graduated *summa cum laude* and with highest honors in English, but he has not even a correct outline knowledge of his subject. His education is a thing of shreds and patches." And Mr. Corbin, mark

you, is speaking of one who has made a specialty of English.

Chancellor Day of Syracuse tells us, in the speech already referred to, what they think at Syracuse University of some other features of the new-fashioned, latest-improved, up-to-date education: "We have no sympathy," he says, "with shortened and diluted courses of study; nor with the spirit that stampedes young men into business and the professions before their time. . . . We hold fast to a classical course. . . . Our A. B. course means classics. It means mathematics. And when an honest student is through with that course, his brain-power has been multiplied manifold. We have no sympathy with less than four years for that business. This is as short a time as you can take to make a brain big enough for the purposes of young business and professional men." Speaking particularly of the latest suggested abbreviation of the college course, he says: "A two years' course is not long enough to cure a sophomore's conceit. Half the young men in college do not get 'dead in earnest' until they are well into the junior year. Many, who would be willing at the end of sophomore year to close their course, insist at the close of the senior year upon taking a graduate course of two or three years more." Then he adds, half contemptuously, half humorously, "Think of graduating a sophomore!"

I might cite the testimony of many others who cannot be classed among the old foggy pedagogues; for instance, almost all of those who participated in the conference on classical studies at last summer's Minneapolis Convention of the National Educational Association. Suffice it to mention Superintendent Lafayette Bliss of Minneapolis, who presided at that conference. He tells us how the

new-fashioned methods succeed in secondary schools. As a result of the extension of electivism to these schools, he says, "We find an astonishing growth in the English and civic courses, which are easy and popular. These courses are generally known as 'snaps' and their general effect, in the high schools at least, has been to lower the standard of scholarship and to put a premium upon that which is easy and inferior." Here is what really attracts in the new-fashioned system, the easy feature, the delightful sensation of drifting with the tide, without effort, "along the lines of least resistance." But no growth, no strength, no improvement, physical or intellectual, was ever acquired by drifting. It will not develop a boat crew; it will not develop men of intellectual culture.

Leading journalists also have recently sounded more than one note of warning against the general adoption of the new-fashioned methods. Suffice it to mention the *New York Evening Post*, whose editor recently expressed the conviction that "If a few of our American colleges would stand firm upon the traditional course in Greek, Latin, mathematics and philosophy, teaching each student the elements of one natural science and of two at least of the modern languages," the experiment would be fully justified by its practical results. And he suggested also that if "It seems best for the average American student to browse at random through an elective schedule, it by no means follows that it is not good for some American students to follow an austere way. And this," he added, "is better done in a college where the *genius loci* is steadfastly favorable than attempted amid the confusion of tongues of a modern university."

I come now to the fourth charge against classical studies and the last that I shall consider. It is perhaps

the most popular of all the objections. Some parents raise it when they say they cannot see in the classics any practical utility for future success in life; if the classics lead to success at all, they say, it is by a very long road, followed by very few, of whom fewer still reach the goal. But suppose we let a successful business man state the objection in another form. Mr. Carnegie, in his book "The Empire of Business," says: "While the classical student has been learning a little about the barbarous and petty squabbles of a far distant past or trying to master languages which are dead, . . . the future captain of industry is hotly engaged in the school of experience, obtaining the very knowledge required for his future triumphs."

Thus far Mr. Carnegie. He does not say anything very serious against the classics, except that they are dead. He has not heard that the coroner's verdict has been set aside. But he implies that some have reached the rank of captain in the industrial army without the classics and he suggests the inference that others can do likewise. He does not tell us of any who have achieved even material triumphs, solely through the school of experience, and he overlooks, of course, the greater triumphs and higher rank of colonel and general in the industrial army won by those who had the advantage of a classical training. But perhaps it is not fair, in this academic fashion, to dissect his objection. I shall let another self-made business man answer him. In one of the "Letters of a Self-Made Merchant to His Son," to which I have referred before, I find sufficient reply to Mr. Carnegie. Speaking of a college-bred man whom he had in his employ, this merchant writes: "Jim was all right in his way, but it was a new way, and I hadn't been broad-

gaged enough to see that it was a better way. That was where I caught the connection between a college education and business. I've learned now that the better trained they are the faster they find reasons for getting their salaries raised. The fellow who hasn't had the college training may be just as smart, but he's apt to paw the air when he's reaching for ideas." Then, raising the question "Does college education pay?" this plain-spoken merchant answers: "You bet it pays. Anything that trains a boy to think and to think quick pays. . . . College doesn't make fools; it develops them. It doesn't make bright men; it develops them. . . . While the lack of a college education can't keep No. 1 down, having it boosts No. 2 up." I think this meets sufficiently all the points in Mr. Carnegie's charge. But for the benefit of those who have been influenced by his words and much more, perhaps, by his great material success, and who still fail to see any practical utility in classical studies for future success in life, I have other testimony to offer.

Professor Byars of McKendree College, Ill., in September, 1901, devoted an entire address, which was afterwards published in pamphlet form, to answering this particular objection. I quote only enough to show his opinion and the thesis which he defends. "If," he says, "the final test of the value of the classics and of higher education depending on them is made in the question: 'Does it pay?' then the answer is, sure as the growth of civilization through its slow centuries, it not only pays but is the only thing that does pay." That is strong language, but it is supported by abundant proof throughout this speech.

Chancellor Day of Syracuse is with us here again. "We stand," he says, "for the kind of study that com-

pels study. With practical knowledge we are not concerned until we make our thinkers. We will get our ammunition after we make our gun and rifle its bore. The mounting of it and the loading of it are comparatively easy." He also meets another part of this objection in what follows: "Time may be an important asset to young men contemplating business, but he who exchanges brains for it buys time at too great a price, for brains are time condensed ten years into one."

Before proceeding further, however, I should like to ask what our objectors mean by "success in life"? Surely those who become leaders in any career, even eliminating the ministry, law, and medicine, must be said to have attained success in life. That being conceded, let me recall Superintendent Bliss, whom I have already had on the witness stand. In his closing remarks at the Minneapolis Convention, last summer, he said: "The college graduate is a leader in whatever he undertakes." And after citing statistics to demonstrate this fact with regard to many spheres of activity, he adds, "I believe this same showing can be made in the commercial field, Mr. Carnegie to the contrary notwithstanding."

Now, to particularize. Would you consider practical utility a preparation for railroad service, and do you regard it as a success in life to be a leader in railroading? Then listen to the testimony of a leading employer of railroad labor, quoted from as recent a publication as last month's *Scribner's*. "As a preparation for railroad service, I would rather have a man who has learned to use one hard book without liking it—a Greek dictionary, if you will—than a man who thinks he knows all the experimental science and all the shop work which any school can give him, and has enjoyed it because it is easy." This

practical business man, you will observe, has not overlooked the disciplinary value of classical studies.

Would you consider practical utility a preparation for engineering, and will you accept leadership in that field as success in life? Then hear the testimony of the Society for the Promotion of Engineering Education, whose members, a short time ago, endorsed unanimously the opinion of their President, Mr. Eddy, that "The crying need of the engineering profession is men whose technical knowledge and proficiency rest upon the broad basis of general culture." Sir Andrew Noble might be cited here again. "Speaking as an employer of labor," he says, "I should say that we find in them [classically trained men] a pleasant speech and manner, tact in dealing with others, and some power of organization." He finds the school specializing scientists, on the other hand, "half stale with too much technical school work." These practical business men, you will observe, have not overlooked another of the advantages of classical studies, namely general culture.

There is another phase of practical utility for future success in life which we might be prone to overlook in this material age. Professor William Schuyler thus calls attention to it: "The great need of the present time is higher idealism, a more spiritual outlook. The majority are given over to mere materialism. Men lack the finer appreciation. Mere size constitutes greatness. To them, a building twenty-four stories high is more important than the Parthenon—that little miracle of perfect proportion in architecture." And then he adds: "It is only through the study of the classics, especially of Greek, that this finer estheticism can be nurtured."

When we say that classical studies are of no practical

utility for future success in life, we must not forget that there are other utilities more precious than dollars and cents, and houses and lands, in the estimation of many minds. We are reminded of some of these by Professor William Baird, Virginia, in the *Educational Review* for April, 1902. "Has it done nothing," he asks, "to invigorate the understanding, to refine the taste, to extend the range of ideas and of sympathies? Is it nothing to share at first hand in what Lord Bacon calls the great catholic communion of wisdom and wise men throughout all ages and nations of the world?" Such is the treasure that the classical student is storing up for the days to come. Is there no practical utility in this?

When you speak of practical utility for future success in life, do you not embrace the spheres of politics and statecraft? Then hear Dean Goodhue, of Carleton College, Minn. "The classically trained men," he said in a speech at the Minneapolis convention, "have shaped the life of the country. The leaders in politics as well as commerce have been for the most part classically bred men."

Do you doubt his assertion? Would you have proofs and names and figures? Then you force me to bring out my exhibits as well as my witnesses.

Look on the picture of the Signers of the Declaration of Independence. Of the fifty-six men who signed that document, twenty, or more than thirty-five per cent, were college graduates. And bear in mind that college graduates of those days were all classically bred men. Those were the days Professor Ladd referred to, a while ago, when our educational system "had not yet developed the infelicities and inefficiency of the present elective system." Of the committee that drafted that Declaration:

Jefferson, Adams, Livingston, Franklin, Sherman, three were college graduates (sixty per cent); and the men who wrote it, Thomas Jefferson and John Adams, were both college graduates—classically trained men. There were four plans from which the Constitution was framed, and these had been submitted by Madison, Patterson, Hamilton and Pinckney. Three of the four (seventy-five per cent) were college graduates. In the Constitutional Convention that adopted that Declaration there were fifty-four men and just half of the entire number were college-bred men.

Now stroll up Capitol Hill in Washington and look into the halls of Congress. In the House of Representatives, thirty-six per cent of the Members are college-bred, and a little more than thirty-six per cent of the Senators. Notice the portraits of the Speakers of the House of Representatives, as you pass along the corridors; forty-seven per cent of these were college-bred, if you include all of them, and fifty-five per cent if you count only those since 1841. Step into the Supreme Court chamber and scrutinize the roll of Justices of the Supreme Court; sixty-nine per cent of these were college-bred men, and eighty-six per cent of the Chief Justices. The proportion increases, you observe, with the greater dignity of the office. Similarly, even in the executive offices, if you scan the lists of Presidents, Vice-presidents and Cabinet officers, you will find, here also, college men proclaiming the utility of classical training for eminent success in life; for fifty-six per cent of the Presidents, over fifty-four per cent of the Vice-Presidents, and fifty-five per cent of the Cabinet officers were college-bred men.

Now allow me to throw a side light on this exhibit, reminding you again that, in this group also, if not abso-

lutely all, certainly the vast majority of these college-bred leaders of men were classically trained. Here is the side light: It is estimated that in our male population of the age of college graduation only a little more than one per cent are college graduates and ninety-nine per cent are not college graduates. It is this one per cent, therefore, of our male population that has furnished thirty-six per cent of the Members of Congress, fifty-six per cent of the Presidents, over fifty-four per cent of the Vice-Presidents, fifty-five per cent of the Cabinet officers, sixty-nine per cent of the Justices of the Supreme Court and eighty-six per cent of the Chief Justices. Why, those men in that one per cent of the male population appropriated thirty-two times their share of seats in the Senate and House. They should have had only one Senator and four Representatives. There are actually thirty-two Senators and 128 Representatives who are college-bred men. Where are the other ninety-nine per cent of the male population? Some of them voted these college-bred men into office because they saw the superiority for leadership of their classical training and culture. Some of them are still asking: "What is the practical utility of classical studies?"

The risk of wearying you with these statistics has been assumed on the supposition that you would find some palliation in the fact that this is an answer to the business man's objection, and we should feel justified in meeting him on his own ground and weighing these fruits of classical training in the scales of commercialism. Moreover, many educators are of the opinion that an exhaustive list of all the leaders in every sphere of activity who have had a classical training would be an unanswerable vindication of the practical utility of classical studies. But such a list is not available.

And here I might rest my case for the classical curriculum; but I cannot refrain from presenting two more witnesses in favor of the general advantages of classical studies. One is introduced on account of the weight of his words, the other on account of the force of his personality.

"If education is to make men," says Dr. Manatt of Brown University, "it must be through man-making studies; and if you ask me what these are, I would answer: whatever best disciplines faculty, widens vision and ennobles character. In other words, education is to yield discipline, enlightenment, inspiration; and the value of any study is to be tested by the completeness of its response to one or more of these ends. The studies that respond to them all in harmonious and happy combination must hold the supremacy until we are prepared for a new eclipse of civilization. Central in such studies is the study of man, as he utters himself in language and literature, in history, philosophy, religion—the humanities, in the widest and noblest sense, fragrant with heroic memories, with lofty ideals, with holy aspirations. The schools that leave this range of mind to choice or chance, to be taken or left at the pupil's whim or caprice, are false to the very idea of culture; and in the humanistic group, Greek still holds the center."

The other testimony, with which I shall close, is that of a man well known to us all, one whose years of experience and success in his career give weight to his words, the Honorable George Frisbee Hoar. Here is what he had to say about classical studies at the inauguration of President Carroll D. Wright of Clark College. "I do not believe that there ever was a man who went through college and succeeded in life, who would not

testify that his college education had been of immense value to him. And I do not believe that there are many men who have been successful in life without it, who would not affirm that they have felt the want of it all their lives and that they could have succeeded far better if they had had it." And to make it clear that he is speaking of the classical college, he goes on to say: "Perhaps we may get a lesson from England which we may not get so clearly from our own countrymen. . . . The genius of England is far superior in everything that affects the life of the State to what it would be without the training in Latin and Greek, and later in the literature of our own tongue, that her governing classes get in her great schools and universities. There is no provincialism like the provincialism which confines a man to his own time. These studies (that is, Latin and Greek) make a man co-temporary with all the generations. . . . They beget, moreover, accurate and clear speech. Accurate and clear speech and accurate and clear thinking go hand in hand. You do not get one without the other. . . . I believe that any man who will study the lives of the great men in the professions, or in public life, will find that, with very few exceptions, they have owed their capacity for public service and for leadership among their fellow-men to these studies."

Every Catholic Child in a Catholic School!

THAT should be our slogan. In the absence of extenuating circumstances, of which the Church is the proper judge, parents who send their children to non-Catholic schools are, by the very fact, *not* good Catholics,

but disloyal and disobedient Catholics. "Good" Catholics make every effort to "think with the Church," and according to the Church's thinking, expressed, for instance, in the Baltimore Decrees and in countless episcopal pastorals, the only safe place for the education of the Catholic child is the Catholic school. "Good" Catholics gladly sacrifice many things, their real necessities at times, to safeguard their children against the perils to faith, and morals, so common in a society which is fast persuading itself that it can get along better without God than with God. They know that this necessary training can be had, ordinarily speaking, only in a Catholic school. They also know that an account of the care they have given their children will be exacted before the judgment seat of God. Therefore they gladly choose the Catholic school for their children. These parents are in truth, "devout Catholics." But those parents are not even passable Catholics who condemn their children to non-Catholic schools, when they might easily place them in institutions where the name of Jesus Christ is revered, and not, as in the secular school, forbidden.

In many cases, moreover, if not in all, they may be thought the objects of one of the most terrible maledictions uttered by the lips of the Saviour of mankind. For those who place the little ones of His flock in the occasions of evil, He reserves a punishment compared with which the death of the body is as nothing: "He that shall scandalize one of these little ones that believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be drowned in the depth of the sea."

Does this condemnation apply to parents who freely send their children to schools *not* conducted in His name, schools in which God has no part?

Dante's 650th Birthday
Father Rodriguez's Tercentenary
Was Shakespeare a Catholic?

The Church and the Sex Problem
The Church and the Immigrant
The Church and Science
Christianity and the War
The Ethics of War
The Catholic's Duty in War-time

The Catholic Press
Ethics of Journalism
The "Menace" and the Mails

Pius X on Recent Manifestations of Modernism
First Encyclical of Benedict XV
Canada's Language Controversy
American Catholic History and Religion
The Causes of National Success
The Architect's Plan
The Delusion of Christian Science
Maeterlinck's Philosophy of Life
Governor Catts' Delusions
The Needy Family and Institutions

5 cents per copy; \$4.00 per hundred

THE "LITTLE BEN" BINDER
BIND YOUR COPIES OF
THE CATHOLIC MIND

IN BOOK FORM FOR FUTURE REFERENCE

Is handsome and durable—Opens flat to any page

ONLY 60c POSTPAID

THE AMERICA PRESS, 59 East 83d Street, New York

Every Educated Catholic
Should Subscribe for

A M E R I C A

A Catholic Review of the Week

The National Catholic Weekly

EDITED by Fathers of the Society of Jesus, it chronicles the important events of the day throughout the world, discusses topics of current interest from the Catholic point of view, contains book reviews and has separate departments for education and sociology. Invaluable for priests, lawyers, doctors, teachers and professional men of every class.

RICHARD H. TIERNEY, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

ASSOCIATE EDITORS:

JOSEPH HUSSLEIN

J. HARDING FISHER

WALTER DWIGHT

JOHN C. REVILLE

PAUL L. BLAKELY

Sample copy on request

10 cents a copy; \$3.00 a year

Canada, \$3.50

Elsewhere, \$4.00

THE AMERICA PRESS

59 East 83d Street

New York